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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/47/253, 386, 597 and 604; A/SPC/47/L.7 and L.8)

1. Mr. ZVONKO (Belarus) said that the subject of peace-keeping had grown in importance because of the increasingly complicated world situation brought about by the end of the cold war. While the threat of world-wide confrontation had ended, thus giving the world community unprecedented opportunities to achieve cooperation, regional conflicts had assumed greater importance. That had led to the broadening of the Organization's peace-keeping operations. His delegation supported the strengthening of those operations and was prepared to participate in considering the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his important report "An agenda for peace" (A/47/277-S/24111). It also appreciated the Secretary-General's other reports on the subject (A/47/597 and A/47/604), as well as the work done by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.

2. Belarus considered that efforts to settle conflicts before they created armed confrontations should be in the forefront of the Organization's efforts. In that connection, it was gratified at the attention the Secretary-General had given preventive diplomacy in his report, and the important proposals he had made, which deserved careful study. It should be remembered, however, that the preventive diplomacy in question should always be directed towards inducing the parties to resolve their dispute peacefully and was thus related to peacemaking.

3. Member States should also give careful study to the idea of preventive deployment of United Nations forces to prevent conflict. At the same time, it should be remembered that the use of force by the United Nations must be regarded as a last resort, as it was not really in keeping with the functions of the United Nations, and should be resorted to only after exhaustive efforts at preventive diplomacy. His delegation also agreed with the view that peace-keeping operations should be temporary, and accompanied by intensifed efforts by the parties to reach a peaceful settlement. The consent of the parties to a peace-keeping operation was a paramount requirement, and decisions about the inadmissibility of a refusal to support the United Nations in such cases should be adopted only if there was general agreement to do so by the Member States. A clear distinction must also be maintained between peace-keeping operations and other United Nations operations carried out for humanitarian purposes; that distinction was especially important in connection with the organization and financing of such operations. His delegation also considered that the broadest possible participation in peace-keeping operations by Member States was desirable, although that could not be made an absolute condition for such operations.

4. It was important to define the structure and relationship between all organizations involved in peace-keeping operations, beginning with requests to

(Mr. Zvonko, Belarus)

organize such operations. The question of establishing a special unit in the Secretariat for such operations should be carefully studied; experience had shown that in itself the establishment of such units did not necessarily solve a problem. It was, however, appropriate and timely for the Secretary-General to establish a coordinating centre to which Member States could turn for information on all aspects of peace-keeping operations under way or planned and which would also receive information on such operations.

5. It was imperative to seek alternative methods of financing peace-keeping operations, as even a small percentage of the cost of such operations could be a heavy burden for States, such as Belarus, whose economies were in a state of extreme crisis. That was especially true for his own country in the light of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

6. Belarus deeply deplored the casualties suffered by United Nations forces in peace-keeping operations, and felt that measures should be taken as soon as possible to minimize them. Some measures of that kind were proposed in draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.8, which his delegation had co-sponsored, and it hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted as soon as possible.

7. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) observed that the United Nations was being called upon to play an increasingly decisive role in peace-keeping and peacemaking. The great surge in peace-keeping operations and the complex new tasks the Organization was assuming in areas like human rights and elections had tremendously expanded its workload, at enormous financial cost. Sri Lanka welcomed the establishment of a $50 million reserve fund to be used especially for the start-up of peace-keeping operations, with the assessed contributions based, of course, on the principle of a State's capacity to pay. In general, the funds available to the United Nations should be commensurate with the unprecedented peacemaking and peace-keeping obligations being entrusted to it. If Member States did not meet their financial obligations in that regard, the United Nations would be compelled either to retard its peace efforts or to divert funds from other vital areas such as economic development activities, neither of which should be allowed to happen.

8. Respect for the sovereignty and integrity of the State was fundamental to the maintenance of international peace and security, as the Secretary-General had indicated in his report "An agenda for peace" (A/47/277-S/24111), and it was therefore also the underlying principle of peace-keeping operations. Any United Nations involvement in elections must have the consent of the State concerned, and the new function of fact-finding, an important element in preventive diplomacy, should never constitute an interference in the internal affairs of a State. Peacemaking and peace-keeping should complement domestic political settlements and democratic processes.

9. His delegation paid tribute to those peace-keeping personnel who had lost their lives, and believed that the Committee should devise a mechanism for looking after their families. It should also consider the possibility of

(Mr. Sikkander, Sri Lanka)

having a memorial erected at Headquarters to all who had died in the service of peace. The draft resolutions before the Committee (A/SPC/47/L.7 and L.8) rightly addressed the issue of threats to the safety of peace-keeping personnel, which all parties to a conflict had an obligation to safeguard.

10. Mr. FUENTES-IBAÑEZ (Bolivia) said that draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.7 before the Committee outlined exhaustively the requirements for peace-keeping operations. The financial requirements were probably the most difficult to meet in a time of chronic budgetary constraints coupled with an explosion of situations of conflict. Proper organization and effectiveness were also crucial in peace-keeping operations if the creation of a new bureaucratic apparatus was to be avoided.

11. The commendable work being done by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations was consistent with the positions taken by the Secretary-General in his report "An agenda for peace" and also by the First Committee in its important report (A/C.1/47/7) proposing the coordination of an international cooperation network to safeguard the security of States, an attractive proposal that would surely advance peace. His delegation took exception, however, with the Secretary-General's somewhat ambiguous interpretation of the principle of sovereignty in "An agenda for peace", which Bolivia considered to be inviolable and immune from any kind of selective judgement that might curtail the inalienable right of States to remain free of external interference.

12. The United Nations was on the verge of embarking on a course parallel to its basic objective of dialogue and negotiation. Any new approach would require the greatest prudence, probity and wisdom, to avoid situations in which the use of force was sanctioned by collective consent. A concomitant reform of the Charter should go hand in hand with the adoption of new functions, so as to guarantee a more equitable participation in the important decision-making, proportional to the constantly growing number of States Members.

13. While his delegation supported the two draft resolutions before the Committee, it hoped also that their implementation would not work against the expected transfer of at least part of the funds generated by disarmament to the developing countries. Any delay in doing so would be a cause for concern or despair that would not work to the benefit of preventive diplomacy or the new international peace order.

14. Mr. BEN LAMINE (Tunisia) observed that peace-keeping, so central to current United Nations concerns, required an effective policy to ensure its success, which the Secretary-General's report "An agenda for peace" had been an attempt to provide and which the newly established informal working group on the Secretary-General's report would help to implement.

15. Tunisia had begun to contribute troops to peace-keeping operations as soon as it became independent and was still maintaining a presence in

(Mr. Ben Lamine, Tunisia)

operations ranging from Cambodia to the former Yugoslavia to Western Sahara, out of a desire to help build an international order based on peace, law and security.

16. In seeking to establish greater international security, the United Nations was pursuing preventive diplomacy as well as deploying peace-keeping forces. Peace-keeping operations themselves must conform to certain basic principles, namely, the consent of the parties to the conflict, a clear mandate from the body ordering the operation, adequate funding, and the non-combatant nature of United Nations forces.

17. The responsibilities entailed in peace-keeping required the support of all Member States. The operations must, for instance, be financed collectively and on time, and with a special responsibility falling to the permanent members of the Security Council and special consideration given to the capacity to pay of the poorer countries. Since rapid start-up of peace-keeping operations was essential, Tunisia supported the establishment of a reserve fund for the purpose, although that question needed to be studied more closely by the Fifth Committee.

18. Tunisia also supported the decisions taken to improve the planning and management of peace-keeping operations by the Secretariat, which was doing good work despite limited resources. His delegation hoped that draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.8 on the protection of peace-keeping personnel would be adopted by consensus. It would also welcome the establishment of an annual peace-keeping fellowship programme for national peace-keeping trainers, although the candidates should in its view be chosen on a less selective basis.

19. As a stage in preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping with its multifaceted approach to a wide range of sensitive areas, was a crucial tool in the resolution of conflicts.

20. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) observed that, as democratic ideals swept across the world, other long-submerged forces had led to increasing regional conflicts that widened the North-South divide and racial and ethnic tensions that threatened peace and stability. Peace-keeping had therefore become essential. Since 1988 alone, 12 peace-keeping operations had been established, and United Nations peace-keeping forces had almost quintupled by 1992.

21. The Secretary-General's timely new report "An agenda for peace" suggested new approaches to collective security and contained some bold and thought-provoking recommendations on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, which merited very thorough consideration not only by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations but also by other United Nations bodies on whose mandates the recommendations had a direct bearing.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

22. It had become clear that the United Nations must take a greater role in defusing tensions through preventive diplomacy. The possibility of taking swift action rested on an efficient information-gathering system, and the United Nations must be empowered to dispatch fact-finding missions quickly, in order to collect data and monitor potential conflict situations from a clearly impartial standpoint. Preventive deployment of peace-keeping troops to deter aggression or conflict might then be in order, even if it meant deployment to only one side of an international boundary and thus without the consent of all parties to the conflict. Such preventive deployment would need to be clearly limited in advance to specific time-frames and objectives. Depending on the urgency, demilitarized zones might also be established as a preventive measure to forestall a conflict.

23. There was general apprehension with regard to peace-keeping operations because of the increasing demand on the one hand and the inadequate funding on the other. The growing peace-keeping deficit not only delayed the mounting of new operations but also placed an unfair financial burden on the troop-contributing countries. The financing of peace-keeping operations was a collective responsibility, and all Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. Bangladesh was particularly pleased at the proposal to establish a $50 million revolving fund to finance rapid response peace-keeping operations, as a step towards putting them on a sound financial basis.

24. The Special Committee had done well to endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations for the improved training of peace-keeping personnel, using the varied capabilities of Member States, non-governmental organizations and Secretariat facilities. Given the wide range of tasks being performed by different peace-keeping operations, there should also be separate training within an overall training plan geared to the specific mandate of an operation and the local conditions in the field.

25. The United Nations should be able to look forward to designating stand-by military units for rapid deployment in crisis areas, under Chapter VII of the Charter, where the conditions so warranted. It might also consider cooperating with regional organizations in defusing conflicts, thereby easing the mounting pressure faced by the Organization. Their experience of local situations and their in-depth knowledge of the geopolitical and psychological conflicts put them in an advantageous position to resolve regional problems.

26. Mr. AL-DHAFEREE (Kuwait) said that, since the establishment of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) after the defeat and expulsion of the army of the Iraqi regime from his country, Kuwait had become even more keenly aware of the importance of United Nations peace-keeping operations and had spared no effort to provide free accommodation, logistical support and fuel subsidies to UNIKOM. It would continue to provide all possible assistance and wished to thank all participating countries for their material and human resources contributions.

(Mr. Al-Dhaferee, Kuwait)

27. The Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" constituted a sound basis for United Nations peace-keeping efforts; his Government gave its full support to that document, in particular the concept of preventive diplomacy set forth therein. Kuwait would continue to pay its assessed contribution for United Nations peace efforts without delay, in full support of the 13 peacekeeping operations established since 1987, and he urged other countries to do the same. Document A/47/597 underscored the importance of training for United Nations peace-keeping personnel. If proper training had been available, many of the accidents which had befallen United Nations observers on the Iraq-Kuwait border might have been avoided. His Government was in favour of measures to ensure the safety of United Nations peace-keeping missions and would therefore support draft resolutions A/SPC/47/L.7 and A/SPC/47/L.8.

28. Mr. ALIYEV (Azerbaijan) noted the substantial increase in United Nations peace-keeping operations since 1987, which he ascribed to the international community's high expectations of the United Nations. His delegation appreciated the constructive role of United Nations peace-keeping operations but recalled that they must be consonant with the purposes and principles of the Charter and should be set up only at the request of all parties concerned. Moreover, they must respect the principle of State sovereignty and non-interference, and force must not be used except in self-defence. Only through observance of those principles could peace-keeping operations succeed.

29. His delegation shared the concern expressed by Ukraine for the safety of peace-keeping operations personnel, both military and civilian but emphasized that that issue was directly related to the principle of all-party consent.

30. His delegation looked forward to the deliberations of the working group established by the General Assembly to review the Secretary-General's report "An agenda for peace" with a view to implementation of some of its recommendations, and wished to welcome the creation of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and to commend its personnel, as well as other Secretariat staff involved in peace-keeping operations, for their tireless and valuable work.

31. Mr. CASTEÑEDA (El Salvador) said that the creation of the United Nations had been essential to harmonize relations between States; its Charter, and particularly Chapters VI, VII and VIII, had established a set of provisions governing collective action to maintain international peace and security. In accordance with that mandate, between 1948 and 1987 13 peace-keeping operations had been organized, but since 1988 18 had been in operation, including 5 continued from the period just mentioned. Their personnel and budget had rapidly increased and, as the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1) the nature of peace-keeping operations was evolving rapidly and required, in addition to military personnel, substantial numbers of civilians, including specialists in electoral procedure, health, finance, engineering and administration.

(Mr. Casteñeda, El Salvador)

32. United Nations peace-keeping operations were a valuable instrument for the solution of international disputes, as had been shown by the recognition accorded them in 1988 in the form of the Nobel Peace Prize. In Central America, the United Nations had had a leading role in peace-keeping, especially after August 1987, since which time it had been monitoring the Esquipulas II agreement on the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America". It had played that role, not just through the good offices of the Secretary-General or his special representatives, but through the establishment of special mechanisms to solve the serious existing national and subregional conflicts, for instance the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV), the United Nations Observer Group in Latin America (ONUCA) and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

33. New elements had been introduced in the Central American mechanisms that had opened the way for peace-keeping operations to take on new and broader functions. When asked to do so by sovereign States, the United Nations could verify electoral processes in independent countries, help demobilize, disarm and concentrate irregular forces in internal conflicts, verify human rights violations, verify compliance with commitments to political, social, legal, electoral or national security reform, and act as an intermediary between parties to non-international conflicts; moreover, the Central American experience had confirmed the need for peace-keeping operations to include civilian workers who could fill gaps during the interval between the end of hostilities and the return to normality.

34. With respect to "An agenda for peace", his delegation had a number of comments. In the future, peace-keeping operations would likely increase in number. A training programme should be implemented as soon as possible, in line with the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/604), States having more experience of such operations could play an important role in training. Greater consideration should be given to the inclusion of personnel from developing countries, so that participation in peace-keeping operations would be as broad and universal as possible. The mechanism for coordination and consultation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations needed to be strengthened, especially where such agencies could help broaden the peace-keeping operations. In the interests of consensus and confidence-building, greater coordination of decision-making should exist between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Regional organizations should increase their coopration with the United Nations. Finally, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to establish a peace-keeping reserve fund.

35. At the Security Council summit meeting, members had promised the Secretary-General their full support in his efforts to strengthen the Organization and improve its functioning. Peace-keeping operations were one area where they could make good their promise.

(Mr. Casteñeda, El Salvador)

36. In conclusion, he noted that Central America shared the concern for the safety of peace-keepers, and thus his delegation supported the draft resolutions contained in documents A/SPC/47/L.7 and L.8.

37. Mr. PALWANKAR (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflict meant the international rules intended to protect victims of international or non-international conflicts. To that end, it limited the right of parties to a conflict to use the methods of warfare of their choice and protected persons and property affected by conflict.

38. By virtue of the almost universal adherence to international humanitarian law instruments, particularly the 1949 Geneva Conventions (to date, 174 States had acceded thereto), those instruments could be considered part of customary law and therefore binding on all parties to an armed conflict. Again, international humanitarian law applied equally to all armed forces in such a situation, independently of any considerations of legality or use of force.

39. The issue of the applicability of international humanitarian law to United Nations peace-keeping forces arose because they were armed, albeit for defence only, and entitled to use their arms under certain conditions - not just in self-defence, but also in the face of any forcible attempts to prevent them from carrying out their duties under the mandate of the Security Council. Such conditions had arisen in the past, for example in the Congo, and continued to arise, as in Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia, particularly when the forces had interpositionary functions or must supervise an oft-violated cease-fire.

40. True, the United Nations was not formally a party to international humanitarian law instruments, but as their provisions were binding on States they necessarily applied to that universal Organization, which all States recognized as a subject of international law. However, quite a few provisions would not apply to United Nations peace-keeping forces, e.g., those relating to prisoners of war and penal sanctions. The United Nations had implicitly followed that reasoning and so had accepted the applicability of international humanitarian law to its forces. For example, the "Interoffice Memorandum" of 24 May 1978 to the peace-keeping forces in the Middle East specified that where they were forced to use their weapons in self-defence, the humanitarian rules of the law of armed conflict would apply.

41. The International Committee of the Red Cross was currently in the process of examining the most appropriate means of reinforcing the applicability of international humanitarian law to peace-keeping forces. Such reinforcement would constitute an excellent contribution to promoting acceptance of, and respect for, international humanitarian law among States furnishing contingents, which, the ICRC hoped, would see to it that their members were fully aware of the relevant principles and rules. It recalled that wide dissemination of international humanitarian law was an obligation under

(Mr. Palwankar)

articles 47, 48, 127 and 144 respectively of the four Geneva Conventions and reiterated its willingness of cooperate in all such efforts to the extent of its resources.

AGENDA ITEM 76: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (A/47/21 and A/47/462)

42. Mr. WYZNER (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information) said that he had come before the Committee in order to highlight some of the activities undertaken during the past year by the Department of Public Information (DPI) but also, perhaps more importantly, to seek the Committee's cooperation and guidance so as to enable the Department to better fulfil its mandate.

43. The unprecedented recent developments around the globe had inspired a political renaissance for the United Nations, broadly expanding its role in world affairs. But, along with the renewed sense of optimism those developments inspired came a sobering sense of realism, for a spate of new roblems had also arisen. No longer linked to the shifting strategic and ideological competition, the arena of conflict now centred on some of the world's poorest, most vulnerable and most deprived regions. The relaxation of great-Power tension had brought to the surface many ancient rancors and resentments, spawning renewed bitterness and bloodshed. The international community now looked to the United Nations for help with new and evermore complex problems, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, peace-keeping and peacemaking.

44. The renewed sense of commitment to the United Nations by its Member States had placed new demands on the Department. In his view, in order to respond to the needs of the new era, its information programmes must concentrate mainly on three areas: firstly, the new expectations placed in the United Nations must be balanced by a sober assessment of its limitations and an awareness of the need to provide the Organization with adequate means and resources to fulfil the tasks assigned to it. Secondly, information might well comprise an effective instrument to counter the prejudice and misunderstanding among nations. While the means available to the United Nations were limited, it did its utmost to assure a flow of reliable information, with particular emphasis on preventive diplomacy and the highly visible peacemaking and peace-keeping missions, where the demands of the media were steadily increasing. Thirdly, progress on the key issues confronting the world, above all, perhaps, the need to protect the environment, demanded the fostering of a new awareness in the industrialized and developing worlds alike. It was equally self-evident that greater understanding by Governments and their citizens of human rights and the often urgent need to offer humanitarian assistance was a prerequisite for the advancement of human dignity and justice. Other crucial challenges such as the struggle against the scourge of AIDS or the fight against drug abuse likewise required a great enhancement of the information available.

(Mr. Wyzner)

45. In all those efforts, it was necessary to achieve a delicate equilibrium. Freedom of expression and democratization of international life must go hand in hand with the strengthening of diverse and pluralistic media structures at both the national and international levels. In all those areas, information and communication constituted indispensable components of the common enterprise.

46. The Department had confronted those challenges with a renewed sense of vigour and even enthusiasm. It was carefully evaluating its information products, the manner in which they were disseminated and the media through which it communicated with the press and the general public. Thus, while pursuing an appropriate response to the emerging priorities to which the Secretary-General had referred in his report (A/47/462), it was also pursuing its work in compliance with General Assembly mandates in such areas of priority concern to the Member States as international peace and security, peace-keeping and peacemaking, human rights and humanitarian assistance, environment and development, economic and social issues, the struggle against apartheid and the situation in the Middle East. He was happy to report that those efforts were succeeding, as there had been a tremendous upsurge in requests for the Department's publications, audiovisual materials and other information products both at Headquarters and in the field.

47. The Department had not been immune to the ongoing exercise of restructuring the Secretariat, and it had been entrusted with the task of providing the Secretary-General and senior officials with regular reports on current news as well as a daily sampling of world press reports about the United Nations and related issues. Moreover, because the Secretary-General was increasingly in the public eye, the Department had been expanding the scope of its support to him in his interaction with the press. Beginning in March 1992, the Department had also undertaken the responsibility of serving as secretariat to the United Nations Publications Board. Because they represented a considerable and important investment, the Organization's publishing activities had received much attention from intergovernmental bodies and Secretariat offices alike. In fact, efforts were under way to strengthen the mandate of the Publications Board to enable it to better meet the expectations expressed by the General Assembly at the last session. While the Organization had earned some $1.2 million in net revenue through the sale of its publications during the 1990-1991 biennium, further efforts could still be made to enhance its activities in that field and some innovative measures were being explored. A detailed report on the subject would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

48. The Department's publishing activities over the past year had been quite successful. The 1987 addition of the Yearbook of the United Nations had been released early in 1992, with the work on the remaining backlog editions scheduled for completion by November 1993. Moreover, the 1991 edition had just been published, marking the first time since 1958 that the Yearbook had been issued within its prescribed deadline.

(Mr. Wyzner)

49. Unfortunately, however, the financial situation of Development Forum had steadily deteriorated, despite the Department's efforts to secure additional funding from the members of the Joint United Nations Information Committee and other sources. A full report on that subject had been submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

50. On a more positive note, he was proud to report that the Department's quarterly periodical African Recovery had received the prestigious World Hunger Award in June 1992. Although the Africa recovery information programme had been one of the Department's most successful, mention should be made of the concern of some delegations that the programme continued to depend heavily on extrabudgetary contributions; the recent decline in the level of such contributions could substantially affect it. In that connection, he expressed appreciation to the Governments of Italy and Norway, which had recently made substantial contributions to the Africa Recovery Trust Fund; at the same time, he wished to seek the views of other delegations on the possibility of accommodating the financing of the unit within the regular DPI budget beginning in the 1994-1995 biennium.

51. Another quite successful DPI publication, the World Media Handbook, had just been reissued in an updated and enlarged edition.

52. Perhaps one of the Organization's most significant documents had been issued in June 1992, the Secretary-General's report, "An agenda for peace" (A/47/277-S/24111). DPI's multi-media approach to publicizing the important concepts advanced in the report had helped it to gain valuable experience in the dissemination of major policy statements so as to ensure appropriate world-wide media coverage.

53. The concepts set forth by the Secretary-General in "An agenda for peace" held special significance for the Department's work in that they highlighted its responsibility to deliver both "internal" and "external" information programmes adapted to different peace-keeping operations. "Internal" programmes could consist of educational campaigns on human rights issues relevant to the task at hand, or training programmes for an electorate historically unfamiliar with the voting process, or seeking to generate the support of the local population. "External" programmes, on the other hand, served to inform the media and, through them, the entire world of developments at the site of the mission. Taken together, they represented the necessary tools for information to further the goals of the mission. In that spirit, DPI staff had worked side by side with their colleagues in other fields of expertise to support all 12 of the major political missions undertaken in recent years. In addition, the Department was also currently preparing a booklet on United Nations peace-keeping containing information on past and present missions.

54. The Department was devoting considerable energy and resources to disseminating information through radio and television broadcasts on a wide

(Mr. Wyzner)

range of subjects, including peace-keeping operations, the work of the Special Commission in Iraq, and news and current affairs. DPI had undertaken a world-wide survey of nearly 1,000 broadcasting organizations to determine their utilization of United Nations radio programmes. The results of those evaluations would be integrated into the planning and implementation of radio programming.

55. The Department's multi-media approach could perhaps best be viewed in the context of public information campaigns for major events, such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the upcoming World Conference on Human Rights and the observance of 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People.

56. A number of activities were being carried out in connection with the situation in the Middle East, as well as the issue of apartheid. A photographic exhibit on Somalia would be inaugurated in the Public Lobby on 16 November (that same evening). It was worth mentioning that 1992 marked the fortieth anniversary of the guided tour at Headquarters, which was an important component of the Organization's public relations strategy.

57. The Department had continued with its practice of conducting an annual training programme for broadcasters and journalists from the developing countries and organizing an annual DPI/NGO conference. Those activities had taken place recently at Headquarters.

58. The Department was continuing its efforts to provide parity in press coverage of meetings in French and English, in response to the concern expressed by the Committee on Information in its report (A/47/21).

59. The Department had conducted a public opinion survey designed to ascertain how helpful its products were to potential users. To date, surveys had been completed in Brazil, Bulgaria, India, Senegal and Zimbabwe. In general, the surveys indicated that the level of public awareness of United Nations programmes varied from country to country. In almost all the countries surveyed, there was a high degree of appreciation for and interest in the United Nations.

60. In view of the importance of local access to United Nations information and in compliance with several General Assembly resolutions and with instructions of the Secretary-General, the Department had been actively pursuing the integration of certain information centres with the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

61. The Secretary-General had decided in early 1992 to establish United Nations Interim Offices with information and development components in seven of the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Those offices would be joint DPI/UNDP operations and would be an important factor in furthering a more rational, unified model of United Nations representation in Member States.

(Mr. Wyzner)

62. Mindful of the concerns expressed by the Committee on Information at its 1992 session relating to the disparity of budgetary allocations to information centres in different regions of the world, he had instructed centre directors in those countries to actively pursue the possibility of obtaining financial support from their host Governments. He was pleased to report that a host government agreement for the Athens information centre which included an annual financial contribution from the Greek Government had been signed on 9 October 1992.

63. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 46/73, the Department was making every effort to enhance the information centres in Tehran, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka and Bujumbura within existing budgetary and staffing resources. Action had also been taken in consultation with the Governments concerned on the establishment of information centres in Namibia and Yemen. In addition, the Department had sought closer cooperation with the University for Peace in San José as a focal point for disseminating United Nations information materials in Costa Rica. A similar arrangement was being explored with the newly opened UNDP office in Sofia, Bulgaria.

64. The Department of Public Information was engaged in active and enthusiastic cooperation with the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. At the eighteenth session of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, for which the Department had provided secretariat services, inter-agency cooperation had been advanced on many joint programmes and projects.

65. As the Organization approached its fiftieth anniversary, DPI was strongly committed to seizing the moment to bring to life the forward-looking vision of the framers of the Charter.

66. Mr. SUHAIL (Pakistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Information, introduced the report of the Committee, and said that the Committee had once again decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft resolutions, which were contained in section IV of the report (A/47/21). Draft resolution I reflected the consensus reached in the Committee on the need for a new world information and communication order and on the importance of the principles of freedom of the press and information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media. Draft resolution II set out an overall framework for the work of the Department of Public Information.

67. Among other things, the Committee at its fourteenth session had continued its important discussions on ways and means of further strengthening the capabilities of the network of United Nations information centres and services. The widespread interest in the work of the Committee was evidenced in the recommendation to increase its membership from 79 to 81 members with the appointment of the Republic of Korea and Senegal as new Members.

(Mr. Suhail, Pakistan)

68. He wished to take the opportunity to express the Committee's appreciation for the continuing efforts of the Department of Public Information. He also wished to extend his thanks to the Chairman of the Committee on Information, Mr. Ricardo Lagorio of Argentina, who had been unable to attend the present meeting of the Special Political Committee, and to the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the representatives of the regional groups, China and the Group of 77 for their efforts to strengthen the spirit of cooperation and consensus within the Committee, and between the Committee and the Department.

69. Mr. LOPEZ ESPINA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) urged the Committee to recommend that the General Assembly should declare 3 May, the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Windhoek on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, as "Press Freedom Day", as recommended by both the UNESCO General Conference and the Committee on Information.

70. The new strategy adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1989 for the development of communication and the free flow of information unequivocally supported the freedom of the press and had already proven its worth. The overcoming of the controversies over information and communication issues which in the past had haunted both the United Nations and UNESCO, and the consensus reached in the Committee on Information and at the General Assembly two years earlier, had also facilitated close cooperation between UNESCO and DPI in promoting media development and freedom of the press. There would also be greater cooperation between UNESCO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on technical issues, as a result of a new agreement concluded in 1992. Under its new strategy, UNESCO had also worked more closely with the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), organizing a round table on independent, pluralistic media in a post-apartheid South Africa as the first major follow-up to the Declaration of Windhoek.

71. A recent seminar sponsored by both UNESCO and DPI had been held in Alma Ata on promoting independent and pluralistic Asian media and had reaffirmed the principles of the Declaration of Windhoek while identifying a number of projects aimed at putting into practice the principles of freedom, independence and pluralism of the press in such fields as training, legislation, free flow of information within the region, the development of public broadcasting services and the like. A similar regional seminar was planned for Latin America in early 1994 and another for the Arab States.

72. UNESCO was ensuring the follow-up to those seminars mainly through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Thanks to funding from France, Switzerland, Denmark, India and Germany, 13 new IPDC projects had been launched in the past few months.

73. UNESCO had proposed a recovery plan for the Pan African News Agency (PANA) which had been endorsed by the Summit Conference of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in

(Mr. Lopez Espina, UNESCO)

Dakar in July 1992, and UNESCO would continue helping to restructure the Agency as a commercial enterprise with mixed government and private-sector shares, maintaining an independent editorial stance. The African Development Bank had pledged to assist UNESCO in sensitizing the African private sector and identifying potential private shareholders.

74. Promoting the free flow of information and enhancing the communication and information capabilities of its member States, especially those in the developing world, were among UNESCO's top priorities. Its 1994-1995 programme and budget would focus on its areas of primary responsibility, including the promotion of a free flow of ideas through press freedom and pluralism; the strengthening of communication capacity in the developing countries and their participation in the communication process; collaboration with professional media organizations including support for initiatives relating to the ethical aspects of journalism. The Executive Board had also decided to emphasize communication infrastructure, technology and the training of communication professionals and to strengthen IPDC.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.